

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1713

UNCLAS KUWAIT 4788

DEPT. FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINR, KU
SUBJECT: \$73.5 MILLION HOLIDAY BONUS FOR GOVERNMENT
EMPLOYEES

1. THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, ABDULRAHMAN SALEM ATEEQI, ANNOUNCED AUGUST 23, 1978 THAT THE AMIR OF KUWAIT, SHEIKH JABER AL AHMAD AL SABAH, HAS ORDERED THE PAYMENT OF KD 100 TO EMPLOYEES (INCLUDING MILITARY) OF ALL MINISTRIES, PUBLIC COMPANIES, AND GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES REGARDLESS OF GRADE, NATIONALITY, OR SENIORITY, ON THE OCCASION OF THE ID AL FITR HOLIDAY ENDING THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADHAN. THE GRANT IS EXTENDED AS WELL TO ALL BENEFICIARIES OF PENSION AND WELFARE PAYMENTS.

2. PRESS REPORTS ON AUGUST 28 INDICATE THAT THE KUWAIT GOVERNMENT HAS AUTHORIZED A KD 20 MILLION (\$73.5 MILLION) EXTRA-ORDINARY ALLOCATION FROM THE STATE GENERAL RESERVE TO COVER THE AMIR'S HOLIDAY GIFT. APPROXIMATELY 200,000 KUWAITI AND EXPATRIATE WORKERS ARE EXPECTED TO BENEFIT. SEVERAL OTHER LARGE ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS THE COMMERCIAL BANKS, THE NATIONAL INSURANCE COMPANIES, AND SELECT COMMERCIAL COMPANIES, HAVE FOLLOWED SUIT BY ANNOUNCING KD 100 ID AL FITR BONUSES FOR THEIR EMPLOYEES.

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3. THERE WILL BE MANY EXPATRIATE BENEFICIARIES OF THE AMIR'S LARGESSE, INCLUDING APPROXIMATELY 50,000 LABORERS AND BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS EMPLOYED BY VARIOUS MINISTRIES AND THE KUWAIT MUNICIPALITY. HOWEVER, PROBABLY THE MAJORITY OF KUWAIT'S POOR, THE UNSKILLED OR SEMI-SKILLED EXPATRIATE CONSTRUCTION WORKER OR DAILY HIRE, WILL BE LEFT OUT.

4. A PRECEDENT FOR THE AMIR'S ACTION WAS
A SIMILAR GESTURE BY THE LATE AMIR SABAH AL SALEM AL
SABAH, WHO DISTRIBUTED KD 50 TO ALL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES
AFTER HIS ACCESSION TO THE AMIRSHIP IN THE EARLY 1960'S.

5. COMMENT: THIS LATEST GESTURE BY THE AMIR OF KUWAIT CAN
BE SEEN AS ANOTHER PART OF A CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED
PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN WHEREBY HE HAS BECOME HIGHLY VISIBLE
VISITING NEIGHBORHOODS, REVIEWING MILITARY INSTALLATIONS,
PROCLAIMING HIS "OPEN DOOR" ACCESSIBILITY BY THE "PEOPLE",
AND GENERALLY MINGLING WITH THE "COMMON FOLK". JABER AL
AHMAD SEEMS BENT ON DISPELLING HIS FORMER IMAGE AS A REMOTE,
SECLUDED FIGURE WHO PULLED THE STRINGS THAT MADE KUWAIT
RUN.
MAESTRONE

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NNN

Message Attributes

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